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ABSTRACT

In this book, the need to reform schools and integrate vocational and academic education is examined in the context of the political dynamics that connect schools and the economic system. Throughout the book's 12 chapters, it is argued that integrating academic and vocational education is a better way of educating students and alerting them to the complexities of the world and the nature of the physical, social, political, and economic reality confronting them. The first six chapters trace the fragmentation of schools and workplaces through an examination of the following: the rise and fall of the democratic vision of work education; changes in the workplace as a result of industrialization, Fordism, postindustrialism, and the technological advancement and social disintegration characterizing the 1980s; debates over upskilling/deskilling of the workplace and intelligence at work and school. The second half of the book focuses on the following: how a critical work education helps all students deal with the loss of meaning characteristic of postmodern work, school, and life itself; characteristics of smart workers; ways of reforming schools that foster good work and produce smart workers; a curriculum theory of academic and vocational integration; and connecting work to the world. (Contains 277 references.) (MN)

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